

Childhood Stroke and Recovery from Aphasia - Peter Dempsey

Childhood Stroke Recovery

Stroke Podcast Episode 33 - Peter Dempsey is recovering from **Aphasia** after a **Childhood Stroke** when he was only four years of age.

According to aphasia.org Aphasia is described as “an impairment of language, affecting the production or comprehension of speech and the ability to read or write. Aphasia is always due to injury to the brain-most commonly from a stroke, particularly in older individuals. But brain injuries resulting in aphasia may also arise from head trauma, from brain tumors, or from infections.”

Childhood Stroke Facts - Peter Dempsey

According to the Stroke Foundation in Australia,

- Stroke is among the top ten causes of death in childhood with the highest mortality in the first 12 months of life.
- The incidence (number of new cases per year) of stroke is around 2 per 100,000-population.² • Approximately one-third of all cases occur in children less than one year of age.
- Stroke affects between 1 in 2,300-5,000 newborns.⁴
- 50-85% of survivors of stroke will be left with long-term problems which may include seizures, physical disability, and speech or learning difficulties.
- 20-40% of children have recurrent strokes.

Go to strokefoundation.org.au to find out more.

As for Peter, the stroke caused the entire right-hand side of his body to be paralyzed and limited his ability to move and communicate.

His childhood was challenged as he experienced bullying, the breakdown of his

family unit, and became depressed & overweight to cope with the trauma of the stroke.

Today, Peter has been able to turn his experiences into a positive and now shares his inspirational & motivational story as a Professional Speaker to train mentor; coach & hundreds of people to live life powerfully no matter what mental obstacles are being faced or what challenges they are being dealt.

Connect with Peter here - <https://www.facebook.com/peter.dempsey1>

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Intro 0:05

The transit lounge podcast moves you through life's transit lounge and helps you go from where you are to where you'd rather be.

Bill 0:14

Good day everybody and welcome to another episode of the transit lounge podcast. If you are someone that you care about who has experienced a stroke and has started the recovery, you'll know what is a scary and confusing time it can be. There are all these questions going through your mind like how long will it take for me to recover? Will I actually recover? What things should I avoid in case I make matters worse?

Bill 0:38

My doctors and therapists were always helpful in explaining things but obviously, because I've never had a stroke before, I didn't know what questions to ask. And so I worried a lot and missed out on doing things that could have sped up my

recovery. If you're finding yourself in that situation, stop worrying and head to the transitloungepodcast.com When you can download a guide that will help you.

Bill 1:03

It's called seven questions to ask your doctor after a Stroke. These seven questions are the ones I wished I'd had asked when I experienced my stroke because they not only helped me better understand my condition, they helped me take a more active role in my recovery, head down to the website, the transitloungepodcast.com and download the guide It's free.

Bill 1:28

Now, my guest today is Peter Dempsey, and Peter experienced a debilitating stroke at the age of four. The entire right-hand side of his body had become paralyzed and it limited his ability to move and communicate. His childhood was challenged as he experienced bullying at school. And with the breakdown of his family unit, he became depressed and overweight to cope with the trauma of the stroke.

Bill 1:55

Today Peter has been able to turn his experiences around and now shares his inspirational and motivational story. As a professional speaker, Peter would love to see people live life powerfully, no matter what mental obstacles are being faced or what challenges they are being dealt with. Now, it's on with the show. Good day, Peter welcome to the podcast.

Peter Dempsey 2:16

Thanks. Yeah, great to be here.

Bill 2:19

Great to have you, man. We finally got our calendars together and we managed to meet in Skype world and really cool to have you on the program because part of what I like to do is share stories. I like to share people's stories. Y'all got an interesting story. It's around, you know, stroke, and childhood stroke. More importantly, but we won't get we won't spill the beans completely on what the story is about until we get some part through the interview because you're got something amazing to share which will offer hope and I think inspire people, regardless of how long they are down the path of straight recovery to continue going for it.

Peter Dempsey had a Stroke at the age of 4



Bill 2:59

You know And to continue aiming for those improvements and for the wins and not to get discouraged when it seems as though they haven't had a win or an improvement over the while. Can you tell me a little bit about your stroke journey and how it started for you early on in your life?

Peter Dempsey 3:19

Yes, sure. Well, I don't remember. Remember much right before that. I had my stroke when I was only four years old. Yeah, that was a really big turning point for my life and my family because back then I didn't have any data or any research on childhood strokes. And yeah, it pretty much leveled me in terms of my abilities, so I had to learn how to balance properly and walk and understand how to use the arms properly how to feel how to listen. Listen to Different people around me.

Peter Dempsey 4:04

Control. Yeah, just like all those very very basic things and regulations, I regulation, all the senses, and the stimulus input, things like that. Yeah so that's, that's basically what I had to start from and build my way back into society. So I've been doing that ever since.

Bill 4:33

So you were four years old, you probably just started walking, talking, feeling doing all those things. And now four years into your short life, you're back to square one. So do you know anything about what it was that caused you to have a stroke at age four?

Peter Dempsey 4:51

Um, no, it's still a mystery. Really both my parents went back through like generations, and there's been No, nothing like this before. So it was a clot lodged itself, just behind my left be in one of the big arteries to the brain. So, where are the brain stem and the corpus callosum like the bridge part between the right and left parts of the brain, right? It massively affected the left-hand side of that, that bridge, my strike was quite deep, and I'm still pushing those limits of of what it did.

Peter Dempsey 4:51

So yeah, and it's been a journey, but if you have like, all these little problems, I guess it sets you up for tackling life. Like you can't do this, like, do it right. And I've seen a little a few quick wins back when I was younger, and I just had that mindset of back then. Life is, is hard and is difficult. But if you can understand how the principles work on how to get over those hurdles, and it does take time and the best, most effective way to do it is Be patient, and be present. Be very noticeable. It will be a lot smoother in getting over hurdles.

Bill 5:48

Yeah, it's interesting what you say like, I did think that I had a lot of problems before I had the stroke. There were definitely issues at work, there were different issues at home. But we just had life issues that we needed to overcome, you know, and then the strike happened, and those issues seem irrelevant and so minor In comparison, it was kind of like, wow, like what a whinge.

Bill 6:54

I was now not that I was a bit but you know, just a normal human being, and I just wondering What is all this sort of stuff has to happen to me? And you know, what is that going on? It's not enough to work and all that type of stuff. Yeah. And then it was like, Okay, so now that guy hasn't turned up to work, but I can't turn up for work either. Like, I'm completely stuck because of this stroke.

Bill 7:14

So, overcoming that stuff was a real learning opportunity for me. And I speak about that sometimes when I present to people about how we focus on things that are minor. And that is irrelevant, and they stop us from doing things that are bigger and more important, and we're just not aware of it. And then suddenly, something massive happens in your life, and being become aware of it. So, so to

me, it was a big opportunity to learn.

Bill 7:43

And I was kind of grateful that I had this opportunity to learn at, you know, 37 Yeah. But you had the opportunity to learn it at four. You just being a normal kid, you would have gone about trying to be normal and trying to interact with everybody in the same way that you would have beforehand. How long were you in the hospital you know, before you are able to kind of get back to some regular life?

Peter Dempsey 8:09

I was in the hospital for a month afterward. And the doctors and physios and all that stuff will be like, we have no idea what's going on. But he's stable now. And since my mom was a nurse, she knew what to do, what to like to make me comfortable, and how to support me, I was in the hospital for the next month.

Peter Dempsey 8:39

Over the next year, I stayed behind roughly I slept a lot hell of a lot about the year after I went back to school, but in a supportive, environment. And it was really cool because of the class and the whole year level. actually, get the whole project on me. So they came into the hospital, right one classroom at a time. And saw me, right, and when I was asleep and I explained what was happening, so that was cool. So when I came back to school, everyone knew what I'd been going on.

Bill 9:21

When you end up going back to school, were you in a wheelchair? Were you walking? How was it?

Peter Dempsey 9:27

Yeah, I was walking but I wasn't. Yeah, I was walking, but I couldn't run.

Overloaded senses due to stroke

Bill 9:34

So you know what you say about your senses being overloaded. Yeah, what does that mean? Because I don't know if it's similar to what I experienced. So on my left side, as I the bleed on the right side, on my left side, my fingers and while all of my skin is really hypersensitive to touch, but it's more like it on the right side and it's numb but it's painful when, for example, like cold air is blowing onto my

left side. So what do you mean when you say your senses were overloaded? Was it just that?

Peter Dempsey 10:12

Well, it was. It was painful, right? So, when I used to get touched touch too much, it became painful, right? Really, really painful. It's like, have you ever had a migraine? It's like a migraine through the roof. Right? Like, I was screaming. I didn't like it a lot. And this is any sense, right? So feeling, hearing, things like that it was just unbearable, and how I've dealt with that is I've looked internally and gone like, okay, there is nothing anyone can do externally.

Peter Dempsey 10:53

I need to find out a way to deal with this internally.

Bill 10:58

Did you do that early on when you were young? Or is this still the kind of came to you? As you sort of continued through life?

Peter Dempsey 11:06

Yeah, it can, it got less and less and less, right? And I realized I needed to control like my emotional state or influence it to it a huge degree. So I need to understand how emotions work, and how to manipulate or influence emotions. And that would help with the senses. Because it's like a driving force. The senses are the input, right? But tag on to that is emotions. And that's what I felt. And when the emotions were when the senses were amplified, the emotions were amplified too the senses were amplified, and emotions weren't. It was easy to deal with.

Bill 11:57

So it sounds like did you was it some kind of a modality that you sort of used to help with? So by modality, what I mean is for me, I use meditation to manage similar things going internally, and just observe what was happening to me and kind of do a process that I felt was beneficial to me, which was, what does it mean, when I'm feeling these things? You know, how am I experiencing that? How am I talking about that? So maybe just pay attention and make myself aware. So meditation helped me connect in places I had never connected before. And was that something that you did? Or did you learn that through psychology or how did you sort of get to understand those experiences?

Peter Dempsey 12:39

Well, I was only like six or seven men. The psychology was, I was like, what's the psychology? kind of thing. I was around psychology, science, and psychiatrists a whole lot, and so I picked up on a few things. One it wasn't that it was. Oh, it wasn't like a kind of meditation. I understood breathing had a big influence on emotions.

Bill 13:09

When you were young?

Peter Dempsey 13:11

Yeah, I would work out that I would start breathing deeply. I would like to try and slow down the emotions that way. And it wouldn't work for like 99% of the time but that 1% it would I was like, that's a good thing. That's a good thing I'll stick to this until and over years and years is it did like so it slowly came down and slowly worked out that I need to put myself in situations which are noisy, right where I'm going to get held right to push, like the sense level like through the roof, right so I can practice on calming down.

Bill 14:01

So it's kind of like an immersion therapy where you go in, experience what the pain is, and then work out a way in your own way to manage it and to bring it down to a level. That's not as terrible as what it is when it first.

Peter Dempsey 14:14

Yeah, yeah. And I don't know if it's my family who helped me out. So when I was 12 and moved to Adelaide, I was like, cool I can get on with this right? My sister started dancing, right so they and we had wooden floors. Right? So again that the noise level went through the roof, right and my senses would get overloaded and then I started tapping, right tap dancing.

Peter Dempsey 14:39

So you can imagine metal shoes on the wooden floors used to drive me nuts. And, so it was just all the things about if I don't consciously do it, if I don't keep on with it, something's going to happen in your environment.

Bill 15:01

You can't control it.

Peter Dempsey 15:03

Yeah, can't control and it's going to push even further. So but yeah, it's, it's a good with my journey It has been a good eye-opening to what level we can be pushed to and what level we can come back from. I mean with with me in, in private school in high school, the only thing I wanted was a really good friend.

Peter Dempsey 15:32

At that time I was bullied and like I'm sure a lot of other kids were, it's just like people are going to have problems all their life. But it's just how we look internally and how we deal with it. And the best advice I've come up with is, to understand how your emotions work, and control them or influence them to a degree. One of the things influencing your emotions is your internal voice. So if you can influence that you can help your emotions calm down, which helps the body calm down, which helps sensory start calm down.

Being bullied at school and dealing with a stroke



Bill 16:15

Tell me about, tell me about being bullied at school so I know now being how old are you now?

Peter Dempsey 16:22

I'm 30.

Bill 16:23

So that I know 30 you probably understand what's behind bullying when you were a kid, but what was it like to be bullied at school, especially when you're in the

situation you were in had nothing to do with you You didn't cause and nobody calls to you, but except that you were in a situation you can do something and now people give me a hard time about it. Was that what you were bullied about?

Peter Dempsey 16:49

Well, I was I was a cheap target really. So in bullying, so I was I had depression when I was younger and anxiety and, things like that. So I wanted to influence and influence the external environment, right my senses got overwhelmed all the time. And wanting that. That's what I wanted and I couldn't do it and I got pissed off because I couldn't do it.

Bill 17:27

And then you got people outside because you were pissed off but your head was on the actual page.

Peter Dempsey 17:33

And I was overweight and I couldn't use one arm. So, and yeah, I couldn't run, right so I still couldn't run. And if I did, I would get on and would fall over most of the time I would fall over and break something so I couldn't move anywhere, and I couldn't talk very, quickly. You know how people can like talk. From like, (inaudible) they come back within another insult, like two seconds flat like 4.2 seconds. I'm like, I love those people, right? Those people are the best. I wish I had like, someone like m&m, as a good friend of mine.

Bill 18:20

Yeah, it tends to stick up for you, but you had to respond in your own time. And that took a bit of a bit too long, did it?

Peter Dempsey 18:27

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it took minutes, right because I would have to work out what they said. And normally what I think they said they didn't actually say, so I would lose the information and then try and regurgitate something in response to that. When I had something called aphasia. It just was the irritating side of that because I knew what I wanted to say. I just couldn't see it.

Bill 18:57

Yeah, so that's what a face she was. Right? It's The inability of the message to get to the mouth and then come out of the mouth. So you, you know how you want to respond, you know what you want to say, it's different for a lot of people. But, you

know, in your case, it just, it was like, it's all happening here, but it's not coming out of here. So, I know how I want to swear at you, but I can't.

Peter Dempsey 19:19

Yeah, that's, that's it. That's it. And it was really, really frustrating me as a kid, and to now I look back at it, and that was my world being bullied and actually I got caught, the news. Well, a few years later, when I was about 18 that the news kept up with that and caught it. And suddenly I was Adelaide's most bullied kid and I was like, I don't want that label either.

Bill 19:55

So they were trying to help and. They called you Adelaide's most bullied kid.

Peter Dempsey 20:00

Yeah, so it was in turbulent times Really?

Bill 20:11

Yeah, it would be man. So it's turbulent. We hear a lot of those stories about people getting bullied. And it brings a lot of people to absolutely terrible places people have taken their lives because of it. And you, you had difficulty because of your right arm.

Bill 20:33

You had all the issues that you had, and you're bullied, and like, now that you have got to the age of 30, you have this insight into being bullied and how you got through it. I had an opportunity to give advice to young people that have been bullied and if they're listening now, like what would you say to them?

The bullied and the bully - Peter Dempsey

Peter Dempsey 20:50

Yeah, absolutely. So there's, there's two, My belief is, is different from a lot of other people's. So we have the target, I don't like to call them a victim because they're not a victim. They're just targets of energy right they're a target and that is being bullied and the bully, so, but they are both being bullied, right but in different ways.

Peter Dempsey 21:25

So, the bullied kid is having all this bullshit. Sorry, all this stuff was held at him

and he doesn't know how to how to control it. The bully is also being bullied by his inner voice in the environment, right things like that. Right so that they have a common ground. It's just they deal with it in different ways. They are forced to deal with it in different ways.

Bill 22:01

So one of them lashes out and the other one accepts it.

Peter Dempsey 22:07

Right. But the drama is the same, but just the outcome is different. And the best thing I can say is, look at what you're what you have. Everyone has gifts internally some people are very strong or very smart, or very gifted in one area. So it's about understanding what that is first off, and then saying, I'm good at that no one can take that away from me, and then looking into like, why am I being bullied in the first place?

Peter Dempsey 22:49

And for me, being bullied by so many different people and trying so many different strategies taught me a lot about trial and error. You try something, it doesn't work, try something else. It doesn't work for something else, it doesn't work for something else, and you will get through it. Right, You will get through the bullying situation.

Bill 23:17

Did you have somebody to turn to during those times like when it was really hard was there somebody that you could rely on?

Peter Dempsey 23:22

I had my parents. My parents were very supportive my whole life and very caring and nurturing. So I'm very, very thankful for them. But they didn't have the answers. So and I was very reactive as a kid. Some people might call me a delinquent. Because I used to lash out as well. When I wasn't at school, my parents handle that as best that they could.

Peter Dempsey 23:56

With all that. It's just about I got to a point where I couldn't try anything else. So I had to try to deal dealing with it by looking into who they actually are. And they were just really angry, aggressive kids because they have pain in their life. And really tapping into that through emotional, intelligence. I could really feel how

they are feeling right so I even if they were really bullying me calling me names, throwing stuff at me, I could really see through them and go, hey, like I could really see you see, inside myself and go, I know who they are, they're just a scared kid and I wouldn't react or respond as much as I could have.

Bill 24:52

Did that make it better? Not responding as much as you did in the past that kind of alleviated?

Peter Dempsey 24:58

It really depends on how you've been taught and how you've been brought up really.

Bill 25:08

Depending on the person who was having a go, sometimes it might alleviate things and sometimes didn't.

Peter Dempsey 25:14

Yeah, and the best thing I can say is, like, understand where the energy is going. And try and use it. So if someone code,s for instance, high for us, right, what are you doing for us? Like, kind of stop, go like a response. Take that. And add on to it. I'm aiming for eight. Thanks for noticing.

Bill 25:46

Yeah, I wore glasses most of my life until I was 40. Well, I know all about the (inaudible)

Peter Dempsey 25:53

So try to try and have some fun with it, right? Because if you're having fun And they're trying to do exactly the opposite to you. It kind of breaks that pattern in them. That's why I found out the best way and I had enormous information just coming in all the time about what was what was going on. I knew I could think of it right. But I couldn't say it. And that gave me a little like, Huh, all right. I know what to say. But I can't say it so I that was ok.

Bill 26:30

So you experienced the inability to walk at the beginning. And you managed to get back on your feet. And you were pretty okay, you couldn't run. You also had aphasia. And you don't seem to have aphasia. Now, it seems like you're talking

normally. Did that start to improve by the time that you can recall or just continued to get better as well?

Peter Dempsey 26:56

It continued to get better slowly everything was a slow incremental step I couldn't like when you're at a restaurant and everyone talking right and you're having a conversation. I couldn't do that until about five years ago. So, five years ago, it really picked up four years on, I can speak clearly and articulately and I'm speaking around the country now.

Learning about neuroplasticity

Bill 27:25

Were you aware at the time of that thing called neuroplasticity? Or is that something that you learnt about later?

Peter Dempsey 27:36

I innately in me I knew about neuroplasticity when I was like, four or five. My parents would say like, how, like all doctors and had the view back then that the brain was fixed, right? You can't do anything. Brian is fixed. And every single doctor said that you won't be walk, you won't be able to run, you won't be able to ride a bike, you won't be able to drive a car, blah, blah, blah.

Peter Dempsey 28:08

But I was still doing it. And I said, Oh he's different he's special, or this like that. So I knew it and I was like, this is weird are there should be other people like me out there. And everywhere I went there, there was just there wasn't those type of people and I still kept pushing until about the year 2000 I think it was when there was a book out of the brain that changes itself by Norman Doidge.

Peter Dempsey 28:40

Right, and he blew everything up. Right. So I'm like, Oh my God, thank God right there is at least a lot of people out there that do this stuff and have done this stuff. So until then, I felt like I was alone. And since then, I've just been really interested in neuroscience because I have a personal story about it. And I've seen many, many changes since.

Bill 29:07

So yeah, I interviewed Michael Merzenich, who's a doctor and a researcher who

studied the brain, and on episode 27, he was the guy that worked in the team with one of the first cochlear implants. So restoring hearing to people who have lost their hearing. And at the time, they thought that they had kind of discovered this amazing technology that was going to help people hear.

Bill 29:36

But in the interview, when I asked him about it, he talks about if it wasn't for the brain's ability to change itself, the technology would be useless. So what was able to happen was, the technology was able to send, you know, sounds into the ear canal. But the brain was able to pick them up in a way that it hadn't been able to do before and it retrained itself, to turn those sounds into something that was able to be converted, just like we're building now.

Bill 30:08

And then as a result people could begin to hear again. So he started working on that engagement, and they struggled to get through all the challenges of the belief that the brain was fixed and couldn't be influenced and changed. And then I started doing more and more research on the brain has changed to enable this particular device to work and are able to see it on scans and they were able to see parts of the brain that lit up once the device was installed, as opposed to prior to that.

Bill 30:46

If they could do that for that and what else could they do it for and then, if Norman Doidge, and a whole bunch of other people, a lot of work started to come out about neuroplasticity and now we know it doesn't matter what you'll lose if you've got enough time and again, Damage isn't too dramatic, you can retrain another brain another part of the brain to take up most tasks.

Bill 31:07

So for anyone that's listening, which Todd might have a stroke, really what we need to do is make them aware that children are probably the best place to have a really amazing recovery because they've got a lot of time in front of them. So if they're well enough, and if their bodies are healthy enough, they are probably going to achieve most things that most children can achieve. And even if doctors are not so comfortable, in saying so hopefully, the parents are just not gonna take no for an answer. Try them for good results like you got.

Doctors say the worst-case scenario - Peter Dempsey



Peter Dempsey 31:47

Yeah, well, and it's like um, there are a few things there that come to mind. With doctors I can the doctors have been taught to say the worst-case scenario. So anything better than that is like a bonus. Right? In saying that people are looking up to doctors and if that's like, that's the benchmark there they're putting, right? Yeah. Then why should I aim for that? and nothing else? That's the first thing. The second thing is it's about children having strokes. They have an enormous amount of time and they're more adaptable.

Peter Dempsey 32:38

And I can't remember like, what it was like before the stroke. Right? So when I was four, I can't remember what it was like before. So I thought, okay, these guys have this. I have this. Let's do something. So in a sense, a clean slate. But I was well, well, behind everyone else. Yeah. So I needed to work out exactly what to work on first and make some really big decisions.

Peter Dempsey 33:12

Do I learn to walk right and use my right arm or do I learn to talk? Right? Since and that that was a big decision, right and I naturally went down brought the token thing, because I really wanted to get to know other people right? And in going down that path, I really learned about how energy works I was working with brain injury say on a few projects, and they say the same thing.

Peter Dempsey 33:46

It's energy. What do I call an energy battery? So what do you spend your energy on I'm sure you would agree that when you have a stroke, your energy is like it takes you a bit longer to accomplish. Yeah, recharge and accomplish your task. Yeah, yeah. It's like energy becomes very, very valuable.

Bill 34:12

Yeah, yeah. And you've only got a certain amount of it, then every day and you're going to make sure that you allocate the right amount to the things that you want to accomplish so that you don't run out of energy. You feel like you haven't accomplished anything unless that was my experience. Yeah.

Peter Dempsey 34:28

Yeah. absolutely. And so we became very, like, I became very, very stringent on my energy. And I was like, I want to donate to this or donate to that. But I still wanted to want to push the limits. I still wanted to find out what, like, I still wanted to be like everybody else or accomplish things better than everybody else. And It took until I was like in my mid-20s. To understand how that all lines up, and the fact that since I did have a stroke when I was younger, what gifts that gave me where I can help other people in doing the same thing.

Bill 35:21

And a lot of people don't see it as a gift of a time and I don't blame them. I certainly can think the best thing that ever happened to me was a stroke as it was happening, but definitely looking back now. So in February for me, which is in a month's time, you will be six years since the first belief that I had. Yeah. And in November last year was two years since my surgery since brain surgery.

Peter Dempsey 35:47

Yeah, so

Bill 35:49

now looking back, definitely, it's been able to be a blessing but in the final, it was really tough for my family and everybody and for me, but now I'm having the podcast. connecting with people like you. I feel less alone. I feel like more people understand me. I'm helping people just like you. And I enjoy that part. Because when I needed help, I had some people reach out to me.

Bill 36:15

And that was amazing. That helped me get over the line, you know, so I'm just playing it back in my own room. Yeah. And it's a good experience now. I'm wondering, Peter, how did you transition out of high school, and then into the next stage of your life, which was after? After 18? And, yeah, did you go into the workforce? Like, what did you do?

Peter Dempsey 36:42

So I worked out that because this was a mindset back then, right, you either get a trade or you go to uni. Right? That that they were the two options and I couldn't go to school. Because they work with getting harder and harder. And I didn't understand the foundational logic that will. So I came really frustrated. So I went and tried to do a few trades. And I kept getting held back because of my limitations. I got my first robot, a happy watch, and right-washing cars.

Peter Dempsey 37:23

So that was interesting. But it was a good job for me because it gave me a lot of time to really reflect and go, okay, where's my next step? And I really had this internal since I've been battling problems my whole life. And a lot of people would say, like, really, really big problems. So I had that mindset of going, Okay, cool. Where's the next problem? Where's the next problem? Where's the next problem to solve? And if there were no problems, it's like, okay, you Look not looking hard enough. It's like, there is a problem. If you don't spot a first it's gonna spot you and it's gonna blow you over.

Bill 38:08

So you were about preventing kind of things from creeping up on you. So you're very proactive.

Peter Dempsey 38:14

Yeah, that's a cool trait. But I got to a point where I needed a 12 but didn't finish it as well. Or I needed a uni. So, I dabbled with it for a few years. I got my size. Because I worked for a number of years, got my sights, and went back to school for my size

Bill 38:41

What did you get you?

Peter Dempsey 38:43

I got me. It's about equal

Bill 38:47

Your secondary school certificate?

Peter Dempsey 38:48

Yeah, And then I tried to go to uni to study icons. I wanted to be a neuropsychologist or something like that because I thought this is what neuropsychologists write they help out with the brain, and like, since I've been around psychologists my whole life and psychiatrist like, I thought that was good until I understood the workload and life of reading, the graphics and wasn't everything I wanted it to be.

Peter Dempsey 39:20

So after then I took Mom's advice and went to the set for mental health Mom always said about all the great social workers because I'll fight everything that childhood could draw you. yeah, she's always been saying that so those are a bit the bullet and try that and which led me to the first work experience and first real jobs are was really really good at connecting with kids.

Peter Dempsey 39:59

And after that, connecting with people with disabilities and brain injuries, and project my way up to being on the border of South Australia, people with complex needs, because I could understand what it was like having those having a disability and a brain injury, as well as, like the psychologist, psychiatrist, and I could articulate between. At that time, I could articulate between the two roughly.

Bill 40:34

So that was kind of your first sort of way into coaching and helping people?

Peter Dempsey 40:40

Yeah. So that's my first bridge between the two because that job work ran out, so I kept learning and kept adapting. And eventually, a few years later, I've been to a number of courses now. And it's Alex Think it's about prevention. Prevention is always better than cure. But if you can prevent people being being a base and being overwhelmed and being burnt out and having disabilities later in life because I push themselves too hard, right, it can prevent that. Right? Or other things like yeah, I would like to do that.

Bill 41:24

And try to fix people when they're broken.

Peter Dempsey 41:26

Yeah, yeah. Trying to fix people when they're broken is, 10 times harder than preventing it right from the beginning.

Peter Dempsey Realizing the improvements after stroke

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Bill 41:35

So you just started to talk again, properly and articulately correctly, and sort of get through your patient five years ago, man, what was that like when you realize that oh, my God like I can actually make a sentence and like articulate it without the delay in the all the other loans challenges and we're going

Peter Dempsey 42:00

Yeah,

Peter Dempsey 42:02

actually, it crept up on me cuz I always was looking for the problem was the problem a problem with a problem and where can I improve? And it was my mentors actually saying like, hey you can actually like string together like a number of words and you can actually like pitch what you do and like things like that and turn around and like that's awesome

Bill 42:29

and so that nothing so you kind of weren't 100% aware of it other people kind of sedate Did you notice? Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. And I've been

Peter Dempsey 42:43

not noticing like the good points front, always noticing, like, what's going to creep up on you and like, all you over say that somewhere else? Yeah, yeah, my mindset is like what's the problem? Yeah. And trying to prevent that or fix that or whatever. So when people said that I can, you can draw, you can keep up with us. It's like, Oh, we did. Yeah, I can't. And I just had no, as Mike said, That's not a focused area, right?

Peter Dempsey 43:19

And occasionally I go like, Hey, I didn't use this before right now I can, right? And I feel like a sense of like, gravity, right? But it's like, Okay, cool. And it only lasts for about a minute or so. I was like, pat on the back. Let's get on with work. Right. Let's get on with the things that are holding us back.

Bill 43:42

Yeah, one of the tips that I give people now that I wish I had done was I never asked for somebody to record me kind of like, month one and month two and month three, just to sort of see what the changes were. And there have been quiet back and show me So that was a bit of an issue for me like, I kind of would be seven or eight months down the track after the second blade and struggling to type an email and all that kind of stuff, because an email might take me two or three hours back then.

Bill 44:16

And then one day I'll be sitting in typing an email and would not have occurred to me that three or four months ago, I couldn't type an email. So one of the good things that I was doing when I was seeing a psychologist, regularly, I'd be seeing her once a fortnight or once a month, she would remind me that, you know, last month we weren't making sentences like that or you did it you remember this or whatever, and I would go okay, well, thanks for telling me you know.

Bill 44:44

I didn't realize that I'd come that far along. I really appreciate you telling me. So that reminder that opportunity for somebody else, your mentor, your family, your loved one to a mind thing. Yeah. And if somebody is listening And they have a child who's experienced Dre. Maybe you want to start doing some recordings and then showing them like, this is where you were. This is where you're at now.

Peter Dempsey 45:12

Yeah. Yeah. I'm old, like the video journaling or something like that. Yeah. I mean, I found, a few journalists from a few years ago, and it's like, Wow, my problems have definitely increased since then. And I see that that problem is like nothing anymore. And I see like, it's like, cool. I've learned up ground.

Bill 45:41

Yeah. So problems. You're talking about the complexity of challenges baby, but again, problems that are causing you grief to start that you're able to deal with and overcome there.

Peter Dempsey 45:55

And with that, right, that was my mindset back then. That was my perspective back then. And this is my perspective. Now it's a whole lot bigger. And I believe, when you grow, the perspective gets even bigger and bigger and bigger.

Peter Dempsey 46:13

And with other people or other people compare perspectives, right I have a class because they believe in that perspective. And this is the thing that I, I have a problem with like, someone else is challenging their beliefs. The mind and body don't like someone challenging their beliefs, or their beliefs have kept them alive.

Peter Dempsey 46:39

But with just understanding and like a much like, emotionally, intelligence right and understanding like the enemy is huge, absolutely huge.

How to reach Peter Dempsey



Bill 46:50

As we get to the end of the episode, if somebody wanted to find out more about God, get in touch with you or speak to you anyway would be the best place?

Peter Dempsey 47:00

Sure, so yeah, the Best place is Facebook really

Bill 47:04

I'll put a link on the show notes to the Facebook page, facebook.com/peterdempsey simple like that.

Peter Dempsey 47:12

Yeah, either way, right? And it's just a, it's under getting in touch with people that that can help you and that you generate that you like to, that you like to know. And I'm open to open anyone that means help or support or wants to do what I do really.

Bill 47:35

I would encourage people, especially moms, dads, or anybody who's been affected by stroke, that needs to ask a question or wants to just share what it is that they're going to get in touch with either myself or Peter, to leave a comment on Facebook. You know, leave a comment on the YouTube channel, leave a comment on the website, wherever and I'll get that information back to Peter if you Didn't happen to get to him directly.

Bill 48:02

But either way, like, we'd love to hear from people without to help out. And if

there's anything that we can do, that we became, and just know that stroke is a journey paid out, like something that you're going to wake up from one day to go away, you won't. It's something that we got to work with, and we're going to find ways to overcome it.

Bill 48:19

And if you can be creative, and, you know, if you can, you know, have the right kind of support, like you, we can even or know what, what was it like 20 years later, still regain the use of whether it's a limb, or whether it's video speech back or something like that, like you're still ongoing recovery and to never, ever give up, right?

Peter Dempsey 48:44

Yeah, and that's, that's the best thing. It might take a short time. It might take a long time, but it's just about understanding that process and enjoying the journey. Right.

Bill 48:58

And I think it's important also to tell people it's okay to get shitty upset, cranky. You know, feel bad, have a bad day yell at somebody, like oh, that's okay too right we're not perfect because we don't have to be perfect and sort of be cranky at ourselves because our energy levels were depleted and we feel really that we felt really bad and we reacted in a way.

Peter Dempsey 49:28

There are so many times I felt angry and frustrated and things like that. But I've learned from the past maybe 10 years it's about how to influence those emotions so don't yell at people, right? Yell the ocean right? Call the ocean like every name under the sun, right? The ocean doesn't care. Right the ocean can take it.

Bill 49:57

And apologize if you do yell at people as I have apologized.

Peter Dempsey 50:02

Yeah, apologize and buy them a coffee.

Bill 50:07

But it's definitely about us changing ourselves, but also around us, also changing ourselves and not giving ourselves an opportunity to learn as well learn about

what's happening around them, and that it's not necessarily or that person's being cranky again.

Bill 50:28

What should again, like, what's going on for that person that you're not aware of today that made them cranky or shitty? And for somebody who's recovering from a stroke, like it could have been a million things that went wrong for that person to help you overcome, you know, to help them get cranky and some of the things we don't talk about, you know because I know some of the things that I haven't touched on yet on my podcast if I some people.

Bill 50:55

Unfortunately, you know, will sell themselves they won't be able to get to the loo on time. And then some people, won't be able to tie the shoe lights or when people do things that we take for granted. And it's kind of like, hmm, so many things can go wrong for somebody with a disability. To me cranky, let's just observe and ask and just sort of be more curious rather than respond and react

Peter Dempsey 51:18

Curiosity, right? That's a big thing, right? Be curious about other people or if they have a disability or not disability. And one of the things I like to just mention is like, I don't want to call it a disability. Right? Because you're pretty much saying they don't have something like they're limited their negative in their abilities.

Peter Dempsey 51:45

If you dislike if you're in a war, right, and you disable a tank or a car, you render it useless. Right. It can't function anymore. So at school, I have changed my abilities I've adapted, and my abilities have advanced in other abilities. And this leads back to a lot you can, every situation you can use to your advantage kind of thing, and that I strongly, strongly believe in that.

Peter Dempsey 52:24

And every, I mean, what helped me when I was a kid was looking at people for I believe was worse off than me, right, that is doing better than me. So, Stephen Hawking, for instance. He's a dude in a wheelchair. Right? That can't move anything for just one I think, right? He is one of the smartest brains in the world that has written seven books. And I'm just like, right It's hard. But if he can do that, if I can get my act together, then keep moving. And I will we all have bad

days.

Bill 53:10

We do. Man, thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it. It's a real pleasure, a pleasure to talk to you. Thanks for sharing your story and letting other people know that stroke is something that we can continuously improve on man, and I look forward to just keeping in touch with you in some way, shape, or form. And if there's anything I can do, let me know, man.

Peter 53:28

Yeah. Likewise, likewise. I'll take it.

Bill 53:31

Awesome. I thank you so much, well, once again, thanks for listening to this episode of the transit lounge podcast, if you liked it, and you thought that this is a podcast worth sharing, perhaps you know somebody who has a child that has experienced a child with stroke and a very early on in the recovery process, it could be a great thing for them to listen to an inspirational story of somebody who has continued their recovery even after such a long time has elapsed.

Bill 54:00

Peter's a really inspirational guy. But what I really love about Payday is that he has the opportunity to share with people that even though he had so many challenges with his stroke recovery, he has been able to use time to his advantage. And for younger people that experienced a stroke, especially ones that have been cared for by parents who don't know what the future quite holds.

Bill 54:25

Perhaps this could be a way to encourage them and keep them motivated to continue after you know the little gains that will eventually add up and become big gains and then add to the experience of, you know, a really great life. So please do me a favor, please share this podcast with other people that you think may need them.

Bill 54:51

Please give us a like on Facebook or YouTube wherever it is that you may have found this website. If you are able to go across to iTunes and leave us a five-star review that'll help more people in a similar situation, find the program. And just thank you once again for listening and commenting and sending me your thoughts

and letting me know that this episode means something to you.

Bill 55:15

It really makes it an amazing thing for me to do and it makes it possible for me to continue doing it because I really love hearing amazing stories of recovery and feedback. Not only helps the people that are listening, but it also helps me in my own recovery and rehabilitation. And I couldn't I wouldn't be here without you guys. So thank you once again.

Intro 55:42

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